

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 944
By McMillan

A RESOLUTION to recognize the Reverend George Gracey on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those venerable members of the clergy, who, through their great capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, have enriched the lives of the people of their respective communities and who have distinguished themselves as religious leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend George Gracey is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for thirty-one years as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Clarksville; his life and ministry affirm his commitment to the principles of faith, perseverance, and hard work, and he will soon be taking a much deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, George Gracey grew up in Covington, and was drawn to the ministry at an early age. He decided to embrace the idea of becoming a pastor after graduating from Southwestern University at Memphis in 1956; not long after he enrolled at Louisville Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, he became certain he had made the right decision; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Gracey came to First Presbyterian Church in Clarksville in 1974, and today refers to the members of his congregation as the Church's "greatest gift"; each Sunday for three decades he has scanned their faces from the pulpit where he will deliver his final sermon as pastor during the Easter Sunday worship service; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary tenure at First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Gracey has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and an exceptional asset to his community; he has played an instrumental role in community outreach programs, including the Clarksville Pastoral Counseling Center, the Clarksville-Montgomery County Library Foundation, and the Loaves and Fishes program, which moved to First Presbyterian about

twenty years ago from its former home in the Trinity Episcopal Church parish hall and continues to be a critical ecumenical effort; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Gracey is blessed with a great and loving heart for God's work, and First Presbyterian Church has benefited from his wisdom and love in innumerable ways for the past thirty-one years; major construction and renovation projects at the Church have included refurbishing the main sanctuary and the education building, as well as building a new multi-purpose activities building; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Gracey is strongly committed to the highest ideals of family values, and is most grateful for the tremendous love and companionship that he shares with "his inspiration," his beloved wife of forty-nine years, Annelle; together, they are the proud parents of three children and seven grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Gracey's outstanding career as a dynamic and compassionate religious leader and an active civic leader is directly attributable to his reliance on God's grace, his dedication to the time-honored values of hard work and common sense, and his uncommon ability to relate to people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, in addition to attending to the expected hospital and nursing home visits, each week this "great pulpit man" has spent an average of fifteen to twenty hours in "think time," preparing to deliver powerful weekly spiritual messages to his congregation, and setting for them an example of a man who loves to live his faith with action; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Rev. Gracey has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, and the members of this legislative body are proud to recognize this committed Christian, dynamic church leader, and eminent citizen of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to the Reverend George Gracey our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors, and thank him for his unwavering dedication to God, the members of the First Presbyterian Church, and his community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.